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ABSTRACT

The seven papers that make up this report focus on the impact of new information technology on curriculum and resource management at the college level in England and Wales. A brief preface, an introduction, and a foreword provide background information on the report and introduce the following papers: (1) "Curriculum Developments in Further Education--The Library's Role" (Allen F. Armsby); (2) "Open Learning" (Penny Savage); (3) "Student Centered Learning--Some Implications for Learning Resources Provision" (Leslie Boyce); (4) "Information Technology in College Libraries--A Solution Looking for a Problem" (Chris Leach); (5) "The Organisation and Management of Library and Learning Resources Services" (Clive Evans); (6) "Staffing and Funding of Library and Learning Resources Services" (Linda Davies); and (7) "Evaluating the College Library--Is It Worth It?" (Fred Chambers). References are provided at the end of each paper, and a glossary of acronyms is included. (CGD)

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COOMBE LODGE REPORT
Volume 19 Number 9

LIBRARY & LEARNING RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: CURRENT TRENDS

By Allen Armsby, Penny Savage, Leslie Boyce, Chris Leach, Clive Evans, Linda Davies and Fred Chambers

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LIBRARY & LEARNING RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: CURRENT TRENDS

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is an excellent example of the kind of joint publication sometimes produced as part of Coombe Lodge Reports.

The idea for the report was that of David Ruse, Manpower Secretary, the Library Association. He and Margaret Palmer, Honorary Secretary, Library Association's Colleges of Further and Higher Education Group (CoFHE), identified the subjects and contributors, and the task of putting the package together was left to Ms Palmer. She — and her CoFHE colleagues — have not only delivered a useful and highly readable report on a subject of which all college managers should be aware, they did it to deadline!

I am extremely grateful to Margaret Palmer, David Ruse and all the CoFHE members who contributed to this publication.

Jean Finlayson
Publications Editor

INTRODUCTION

The Library Association is the professional institution for libraries in the United Kingdom. Its Colleges of Further and Higher Education Group (CoFHE) has 2000 members spread throughout FHE colleges and polytechnics in the United Kingdom. CoFHE exists to:

- promote and monitor standards and good current practice in librarianship in the field of further and higher education;
- supply informed advice to the Library Association on professional matters from the viewpoint of academic institutions;
- facilitate communication between its members and the Library Association; and
- help members to keep up to date and to develop professionally, organising meetings and conferences and publishing material on current issues.

CoFHE has a national committee of 14 and an active network of regional circles. The latter are very much the product of members' initiatives and are often formed as a result of attendance at the Group's four-day annual conference. The Group publishes the CoFHE Bulletin three times a year.

College librarians believe themselves to be educators and base their services on the academic objectives of their colleges, responding actively to their information needs. This philosophy is fully expressed in **College Librarianship** (Library Association, 1984), to which a number of members contributed. CoFHE Group has also produced, for the Library Association, **College Libraries: guidelines for professional service and resource provision** (Library Association, 1982).

Contact addresses: The Library Association, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE (tel: 01-636-7543) or Honorary Secretary, Margaret Palmer, NESCOT Library, Reigate Road, Ewell, Surrey LY17 3DS (Tel: 01-394-1731).

FOREWORD

It is three years since Coombe Lodge published a report concerned with learning resources. The CoFHE (Colleges of Further and Higher Education) Group of the Library Association welcomes the Further Education Staff College's prompt response to its proposal that an updating report on developments in this highly dynamic area would be timely.

During recent years colleges have faced a time of unprecendented pressure during which new curriculum initiatives have been legion, as have changes in learning methods — reduced class-contact hours, open learning, student-centred learning, resource-based learning. At the same time, the requirement to manage their resources — human, financial and physical — efficiently and effectively, giving value for money in a climate of rigorous financial restraint, has been common to all colleges. The advent of information technology has presented an enormous challenge, both in the curricular and management contexts.

The papers in this report look in depth at these themes and, while they may be read as discrete contributions, have been arranged in a sequence designed to contribute to the over-all value of the report to the reader. The first three papers examine developments in the curriculum and learning modes. Allen Armsby gives an overview; Penny Savage and Leslie Boyce look at two of the more important areas, student-centred learning and open learning, in more detail. They emphasise the implications for learning resources services and the contribution which their personnel are uniquely qualified to make to the institution's work in these areas.

Chris Leach then looks at information technology, both as a basis for new services to be given by the college's main information provider, the library, and as a tool which it can use to improve its own management. Clive Evans considers the organisation and management of library and learning resources in the context of the opportunities and problems outlined in the preceding chapters.

In the two final papers, Linda Davies studies the need to review staffing and funding of services in the light of their changing role, and Fred Chambers looks at the final step in any service provision, the evaluation of its performance.

It is significant that, while writing independently of each other, all the contributors have chosen to stress the role of the college library service as active and constantly evolving, linked inextricably to the needs of its parent institution.

Librarians are seen as part of the educational team. They bring to it their particular skills and long experience of student-centred learning, teaching information retrieval skills and resource-based learning — all of which are now so crucial to FE and HE provision. Equally important is their often stressed recognition of the threefold role of the librarian as educator, learning resources professional and manager. My colleagues have examplified this in their contributions to this report.

Finally, it should be noted that wherever the word 'library' is used it should be realised that this may represent many different kinds of organisation of learning resources. The library may be a part or the chief part of a learning resources unit. Alternatively, it may work in co-operation with other learning resources services, the activities of which are co-ordinated by a committee and/or a member of the directorate. The library is understood to be concerned with the acquisition, organisation and exploitation of all types of learning resources.

Margaret Palmer
Tutor Librarian, North East Surrey College of Technology
Honorary Secretary, Library Association's Colleges of Further and Higher Education Group (CoFHE)

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS IN FURTHER EDUCATION: THE LIBRARY'S ROLE

Allen F Armsby
Head of Library Services
Newcastle College of Arts & Technology

Later sections of this report explain in detail the range of services that can be offered by libraries in colleges of further education. This paper, in contrast, is an attempt to capture the attention of busy college managers who may feel that the college library is among the least of their problems. This attitude is understandable, given the changes and pressures to which all colleges are currently subjected. It is hoped that this paper's rather blunt and direct message may at least prick the conscience of some college managers or stimulate a re-appraisal of their college library service.

While appreciating that college managers are continually swamped with literature which demands their attention, many librarians feel that the central ground they occupy in some of the current debates concerning further education's approach to how and what it teaches is often overlooked. If a college management's attitude is still in a traditional mould concerning the library's role, there is a danger that they will ignore or miss the valuable contribution which the library can make to help teaching methods change and to support new curriculum initiatives.

The longer one works in further education, the more assumptions based upon organisational size and supposed levels of student attainment become increasingly hollow and meaningless. Many librarians in further education

have long envied their colleagues in polytechnics and universities their chance to offer academic staff and students access to infinitely better library resources than it is possible to do in their own colleges. They have wondered why, in fairness to their own staff and students, this should be. Many elements are at work here, but three main factors are suggested:

- Librarians in HE institutions can call upon powerful academic bodies, both from within and outside the institution, e.g. CNAA, to support their case for adequate resources and can draw upon strong pressure groups to lean upon the managers in order to release the necessary resources.

- There is a belief within HE institutions that a strong academic library service is not only beneficial to the staff and students, but that such a library is positive and visible proof of a progressive attitude towards the acquisition of knowledge.

- Teaching methods used within HE institutions have required the support of a strong service, not only because students within all subject disciplines are made increasingly responsible for managing their own learning, but also because a poor library hinders the work and research of academic staff.

LACK OF SUPPORT

With few exceptions these points could not be made about libraries within further education. There is no shortage of groups who take an interest in college libraries. They include NATFHE, DES, CET and the Library Association. All of these bodies have produced guidelines, but none of them could be said to have any real teeth, and none of them is mandatory. Some bodies who might have supported libraries more strongly, such as RSA, FEU, City and Guilds and BTEC, have failed to produce any documents that a librarian could use to press a college management into action.

Although the recent Library Association survey of college libraries (LA 1985) shows that almost 90 per cent of college librarians in England and Wales are members of the academic board, that is not an indication that they are automatically part of the college management team. Many are not in strong positions from which their opinions and recommendations can be put directly to senior management. The lack of supporting documentation or

external bodies putting effective pressure upon colleges makes it vital that colleges should be mature enough to look at their own provision, to enter into a debate with all interested parties throughout the college, and make a bid to improve their college libraries. Where such development has taken place it has usually been as a result of internal appraisal allied to an LEA's desire to fund improvement. College managers have to look for themselves at the new curriculum developments and see how improving the library can help the college to achieve its objectives. This lack of willingness in the past has led to an alarmingly high number of poor college libraries.

If this judgement seems harsh, a look at Library Association statistics will show just how low the funding of libraries actually is, or how desperately short of seating most libraries are. Many colleges do not give the impression that they actually know why they have a library. For real insights into the truth of this statement one need look no further than published HMI reports. Comments are repeatedly made about insufficiency of stock, poor quality of service, low staffing, and minimum facilities. Many libraries are clearly seen as having no role within their colleges; their inclusion on the accommodation schedule is merely an empty gesture.

Managers reading the whole of this Coombe Lodge Report will be left in no doubt about the range and quality of service that can be achieved once the potential role of the library has become recognised and encouraged. The lack of understanding of a library's role, or a determination to restrict its activities to purely traditional areas, results in poor funding, inadequate staffing, and minimum space allocation. Paradoxically, it is often in those conditions that the library is seen to be a drain upon resources, giving little return and a feeling that the money would be better spent upon a more important project. Any initiative within the library becomes stillborn. Is it wrong to argue that if a strong library reflects a college's positive attitude towards learning and teaching, a bad library service reflects a poor attitude towards the needs of staff and students?

Colleges with inadequate libraries will shortly be forced into drastic improvements because of curriculum initiatives which require the support of a good library service. A radical change is already in progress in the teaching methods employed in further education colleges, pushed on by such bodies as FEU, City & Guilds and BTEC. The increased attention being paid to what students learn, and how they acquire knowledge, is leading us away from a passive mode of learning into one which is more dynamic and requires greater resourcefulness from student and lecturer.

In essence, teaching methods in further education are moving towards a style that has until now been regarded by many as appropriate only to students in higher education. The role played by libraries will thus become increasingly central to the needs of lecturers and students. It would be foolish to claim that improving a library service alone can create a climate more in accord with modern teaching requirements, but it is one of a number of essential 'cogs' which colleges will have to re-evaluate. The chances are that if the library needs to be shaken up, so will a great many other areas relating to student/staff facilities, access to learning resources, curriculum related financial adjustments and college environment. The totality of all the changes required cannot be absorbed by one part of the college if nothing else changes, but an enhanced library service can act as a useful spearhead into stimulating other changes and altering a college's whole ethos. As an improved library service can affect so many people across a wide range of subjects and ability levels, money spent in this area can be of immediate benefit throughout a college.

CURRICULUM INITIATIVES

Re-assessment of the library's role within further education is not even a matter of choice. It will be impossible for college managers to sit tight and wait for this bandwagon to pass by. Many ideas in education have come and gone, and it is tempting to think that this particular climate of opinion will die like many others. But there are three elements which will make this movement less fickle than some of its predecessors.

— The Audit Commission has forced colleges to look at their own internal efficiency. Among other issues raised has been that of how students are being taught and for how long. In many colleges there has already begun a considerable reduction in class contact hours; this process will only increase. The degree of formal classroom and workshop based teaching will contract, but that does not mean that students will be expected to stop learning. Many college libraries are experiencing demands for more study spaces — additional space for groups to complete assignments or for students with free time which they have not been taught to put to good use. Where this reduction in contact hours is a matter of deliberate managerial policy, the library should be helped to play its part by catering for these changes. Managers have a duty to ensure that a

learning environment is provided within the college and should not expect released students to hang like bats from classroom ceilings!

- Open learning is a familiar concept to libraries — it is one of the ideas upon which they were built. Colleges will be forced by MSC, BTEC, Open College and society in general to offer an increased range of open learning opportunities. This means creating freer access to materials, equipment, support and advice. Where colleges allow the community access to their premises, the library can be responsible for making available study areas, materials, resources and access to information technology, hardware and software. As a contributor to a college's open learning strategy the library can be a powerful tool and an important feature of a marketing strategy.

- The curriculum developments currently being absorbed by further education — including TVEI, CPVE, GCSE, and the new BTEC initiatives — will have many features in common, despite their varied levels, particularly the emphasis now being placed upon common core skills and the need to widen the range of teaching methods across all subject and vocational areas.

The common features within the many new curriculum initiatives vary in importance, but they all include the following:

- A move towards student-centred learning in which the needs of the individual student will receive greater attention: students will be encouraged to take a more active role in the acquisition of knowledge, rather than being passive observers. If students are encouraged to find out more for themselves, the library will have a very significant role to play.

- A move towards the lecturer becoming a facilitator of learning rather than purely a deliverer of information: to undertake that task they will need access to a greater range of audio-visual and printed resources than ever before. They will have to interact more with the providers and organisers of resources, and that means adding librarians to curriculum and course planning teams.

— The wider range of teaching strategies will include more project work, integrated assignments, private study time, group information work, access to information technology, a serious look at study skills, assignments and information seeking exercises. This is an incomplete list, but it includes those elements in which a library service can help the teaching staff use the library as a resource base. Lecturers will have to look more closely at what they are teaching and the efficiency of its delivery, and consider teaching methods employed in other disciplines.

— An emphasis upon such common core skills as numeracy, literacy, computeracy and communication: in the future there will be a greater emphasis upon personal development to include self reliance, development of judgement, analysis of data, critical awareness, personal initiative and social skills. Seeking information in a library is not a passive academic pastime. It requires skill, manipulation, initiative, intelligence and application — the very skills rightly thought to be of lasting benefit to the student. Students will gain not only from using the library, but also from mixing with a wide spectrum of other library users. Learning to use an open environment without abusing the freedom is a valuable feature of any library.

— An increased use of information technology across the curriculum will encourage students to ask for free and immediate access to equipment and databases. Students should have access to these facilities as a necessary support to their work in classrooms and workshops. Housing computers in libraries makes them available to students across all subject disciplines. Access to such equipment in a library allows those students who are not being taught to handle computers to have direct access to them to acquire additional skills by using teaching packages, literature or help from friends.

— An increased use of integrated projects using interactive and discovery methods will encourage students to seek information and present their findings in either traditional or more exciting presentations, using a wide range of audio-visual methods.

— By an emphasis upon helping students, through study skills, to

help themselves to learn and make effective use of their time, libraries can play an important role. They can help students improve their study skills and learn to locate information in an efficient and effective manner.

— Student-centred learning is precisely the concept upon which libraries in academic institutions were founded.

— An increasing number of lecturers are beginning to make more extensive use of libraries than ever before, but if the library is poorly funded it will lack the depth of provision that is vital if it is to cater for all groups. With larger budgets the range of facilities can be increased and the stock enhanced. This, in turn, will encourage the lecturing staff to experiment with new approaches. These virtually always demand additional material resources. If they are not provided many new initiatives will fail and there will be a retreat back into more traditional teaching methods.

— Further education is famous for its wide range of students. A library can act as a mixing area in which people learn to respect each other's needs and respond to a positive environment. The freedom for users to choose their own materials, subjects, levels, and interests is one of a library's most important assets. It is such an obvious feature that it can be overlooked and taken for granted. Many college curriculum 'workshops' are attempts by teaching staff to re-create a library environment for they recognise that this freedom of access is precisely the approach that works best with modern students. But many such workshops fail because the librarian's skill at providing access to and organising a wide variety of material resources on a self-help basis is greatly under-valued.

RESOURCE RE-ASSESSMENT

The changes and challenges which these new opportunities present will be welcomed by the majority of college librarians, but they may find it impossible to respond positively unless additional support and resources are provided by management. Librarians know that their colleges must struggle with limited budgets, but as the Library Association survey shows,

the funding of libraries has not been generous and, as they have usually been part of a central college resource budget, they have lost out heavily in favour of the departments. It is time, perhaps, that the financial allocation to departments was re-examined and the role of the library, in supporting the learning activities of students, given additional weighting. Librarians have been faced with the frustrating professional experience of being asked for books they cannot afford, journals they cannot subscribe to, and demands for new services and support for new courses which they cannot provide.

A library is a manager's worst nightmare come true. The more successful it is the more people demand from it. Colleges must accept that as a result of new curriculum initiatives coming from the examination bodies, the balance of resourcing will have to be shifted in the library's favour. Resource-based, student-centred learning means access to resources. There has to be an end to explaining to students why books cannot be purchased, why evening or longer opening hours are impossible because of a shortage of library staff, or why students must sit on the library floor because chairs are scarce. There is no cause for pride in handing to the first construction, computing or chemistry student the material they need for a project or an assignment; the pride comes in being able to provide something for the last student.

College managers who take curriculum development seriously must ask fundamental questions about their library service, among them might be the following:

- Does the college have a well defined set of learning aims and objectives and, if so, are the library staff aware of them and does the library have a complementary set of aims and objectives?

- Is the college accepting the trend towards resource-based, student-centred learning? If so, is the librarian in a position to help achieve this and, if not, will the college's structure be altered to ensure that he/she can?

- Is the library a single unit? If so, should it not be brought into a larger sphere of activity by merging or co-operating with other information providers within the college? Will the librarian be involved in the necessary debate?

- Does the college wish to give its students access to a wider variety of relevant learning materials in quantity? Is the library one of the main providers of this material and, if so, will there be a realistic budget to provide it?

- Does the college believe that all students should have access to study facilities, the right to a place in which to work, and will the space be provided?

- Does the college wish its students to have free access to information technology hardware and software throughout the teaching day, and will this be provided in the library?

- Does the college want the librarian to ensure that the library reflects accurately and closely the needs of the curriculum? Will the necessary mechanisms be set up to achieve this? Will adequate staffing be provided so that the librarian can attend meetings?

A librarian on his/her own cannot influence a whole management team unless the team itself perceives the need for a library and is aware of how much its development has to be supported. Librarians can attend meetings, lobby, and write papers, but the movement can only come from a widening of the perception of the role of the library by management. College librarians need the support of their senior colleagues, perhaps now more than at any other time. Lecturers and managers equally need the support of a good library service.

Let us hope that one result of current curriculum changes will be that, as in polytechnics and universities, the library will become a mirror of the importance placed by the college upon knowledge, learning and academic freedom.

REFERENCE

Library Association (1985) **The college library survey December 1984**. LA.

OPEN LEARNING

Penny Savage
Tutor Librarian
Cambridge College of Further Education

Open learning is a term heard with increasing frequency in our institutions in recent years, yet there seem to be as many definitions of the term as there are people who use it. As open learning has developed and new projects have been initiated the meaning has expanded to embrace a wider concept. For our purposes here it is intended to use the Council for Educational Technology definition (Lewis & Spencer, 1986):

> 'Open learning' is a term used to describe courses flexibly designed to meet individual requirements. It is often applied to provision which tries to remove barriers that prevent attendances at more traditional courses, but it also suggests a learner-centred philosophy. Open learning courses may be offered in a learning centre of some kind or most of the activity may be carried out away from such a centre (e.g. at home). In nearly every case specially prepared or adapted materials are necessary.'

The key element in all open learning is the learner, consequently the courses are learner-centred. Students, or clients, are not asked to fit into provision already made in the college but in effect have a course constructed around and specifically for them. Initiatives such as the Open University have heightened public awareness of alternative modes of study and increased the community's demands on their local college. Government initiatives such as the Open Tech with its sponsored projects to develop materials, delivery systems and support services have made many people more aware of the learning possibilities available. It is evident that there is a need for such courses, 'traditional' further education having

failed people for many reasons, for example, the course required may not be offered locally or folds through lack of numbers, or external commitments prevent attendance on the designated night.

Open learning schemes have developed in many different ways according to local needs and circumstances. They fall broadly into three categories.

1 **College-based systems** in which students attend college for their learning but the mode, time and pace of that learning is determined by the student. Colleges operating this mode use workshops and drop-in centres, with learning material and any equipment necessary available to the student on an 'off the shelf' basis. The student can spend as long or as short a time as he/she wishes in the college, working at his/her own pace and with access to a subject tutor should one be needed. In some systems tutorials are held at specified times — often outside the traditional college day — enabling students to raise specific queries with a tutor. These sessions are often subject rather than course based.

2 **Local systems** in which students live within the locale of the college and may attend for the occasional session or to make use of college facilities. The focus, however, remains centred on the open learning package which is worked through at home, or, if sponsored by an employer, possibly at work. A group within a company on an open learning course may have tutorials during work time on work premises, though tutored by college staff. An individual may opt to meet his/her tutor away from college — at home, in the pub or at the local library.

3 **Distance systems** in which students effectively follow correspondence courses and have no contact with their base college other than by post. This is ideal for those who work away from home or are disabled. For open learning centres in some colleges this has proved the most cost-effective mode of operating.

Independent student-centred learning is certainly nothing new for the library. In many respects libraries have provided open learning since their inception. Users select material — in recent years from a far wider range of resources than purely print based — to construct their own learning package

which they then study at a pace and place to suit themselves. The college library is not insular; it does not operate as a separate unit but as an integral part of a larger body — i.e. the institution to which it belongs. Thus:

'No consideration of current influences (in education) can ignore moves towards distance learning, open learning, Flexi-Study and similar methods of study which endeavour to cater for the personal circumstances of the student. Any move away from 'chalk and talk' towards resource-based, student-centred learning will have an impact upon all areas of the college; this impact will be felt particularly by the library which will be called upon to provide resources to support these learning modes, and must modify its service pattern to satisfy changing student needs'. (Burton, 1984)

The implications and opportunities for the library and learning resources services within an institution are tremendous. As already noted, libraries have been in the business of open learning for years and recent developments in our colleges are thus an extension of facilities already available there, hence the experience and knowledge of the librarian can be invaluable to college management in establishing and running open learning.

It is encouraging to note the number of institutions which are setting up open learning units based either on or adjacent to the college library. The reasons for this are various.

- The library is the one professionally manned service point open in evenings and possibly at weekends when, by their very nature, open learning students are likely to come to the college.

- The library is used to handling learning resources in a wide variety of forms whether computer based, print based, audio or video.

- The library has the facilities and experience to identify and trace materials, store them, loan them and retrieve them.

- The library provides an open environment for private study, generally with access to computers, videos and other audio visual hardware needed to run the packages.

The implications for the library thus fall into two main categories: the role that the learning resources services can play in the planning and development of open learning within the institution and the internal management of library facilities for open learning students. The role the library can play in open learning should not be underestimated; institutions which do not involve the library are neglecting a vital resource.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

I will focus on three areas where the learning resources service can provide an invaluable contribution in the implementation of an open learning programme.

Materials

Some institutions have chosen to develop their own learning materials, often to meet a specific local need or to fulfil a wider need that is not being met elsewhere, with the intention of running courses locally and marketing the material on a wider scale to other institutions and organisations. This is a time consuming and expensive option, especially if material is to be of marketable quality. An increasing number of open learning schemes are concentrating on the delivery of material already available.

The library is able to advise management or other relevant staff on the availability of materials of all kinds. Librarians are often more aware than academic staff of the availability and sources of learning materials. MARIS (Materials and Resources Information Service) is a computerised database of open learning materials which can be accessed through Prestel, a facility many colleges now have. Though funded by the Manpower Services Commission's Open Tech programme, the information held relates to material produced from a wide range of sources — not just those produced by Open Tech projects.

Similarly the library will have a framework for obtaining materials for purchase (often with a discount) or on an inspection copy basis. The professional librarian's skills in locating, obtaining and assessing materials in conjunction with colleagues in relevant subject fields can be vital.

Staff

If it is assumed that the centrality of the learner is the focal point of open

learning and that the learning needs of the individual are met in whatever way seems germane, the variations offered by the combination of different modes of study and the kinds of media used are infinite. Even given that no institution is able, for purely practical reasons, to offer open-ended open learning and must therefore concentrate on a few basic models, the implications for student, staff and institution may be far reaching. The librarian will be more aware than many academic staff of the implications of different study modes and media for the student since assisting students in private study is one of the main activities of academic libraries.

It follows that the library's contribution of facilities and resources for the student may mean the difference between success and failure. The library may well be the students' main contact with the institution, in which case it is essential that the library is involved at every stage of the planning and implementation of open learning. In this way the library can ensure that it is able to offer the learning resources the student will require if embarking on a particular mode of study and is in a position to advise staff on implications of the various modes of study.

Users

If the open learning enquirer is to attend college outside the normal college day, the library will probably be the first point of contact for information. The librarian must therefore be informed both as to what is available and what the enquirer needs. Librarians have the necessary questioning skills and exercise them daily in meeting student needs within the library. It has been said that:

> 'We have been far too modest about the importance of skills which librarians possess. Librarians are much better at 'question negotiation', trying to discover what people really want as distinct from what they ask for, than many other professionals. We tend to cut off at the point of establishing the particular item the enquirer needs, but there is no reason why the skills should not be applied more widely'. (LA 1985)

Any librarian will know how the student who asks for books on history may, on adroit closer questioning, simply wish to know the name of the bug that caused the potato famine in Ireland. It is a curious fact that people rarely ask for what they actually want, be it through shyness or ignorance of the system and what is available. This is equally true of the enquirer for open learning, though here further compounded by the fact that, with what

is still a relatively new initiative in our institutions, there is a lack of knowledge of what we are able to offer.

In institutions where the librarian is part of the open learning team, as co-ordinator or information point officer, the skills used in questioning and relating to readers are easily transferable to establishing the needs of open learning students at all stages of their careers — from initial enquiry to course completion.

It is implicit in the above that librarians and academic staff work closely together; in a more open mode both librarian and lecturer must be accessible to the student. To cater adequately for student needs a strict separation of library and teaching staffs is untenable; academic staff will need the skills of library staff and the learning resources services to run open learning programmes effectively and efficiently.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

Within the library itself a more flexible approach needs to be adopted for open learning students as their pattern of library use is very different from that of students following traditional courses. A number of questions needs to be addressed, the answers to which will vary according to local needs and restraints.

- What will loan periods be for the student who attends college perhaps only once a month, or less, or not at all?

- What facilities will be made available for library membership —bearing in mind that open learning students will not be following a traditional college year and may have no cut off date for the end of the course?

- What will the library purchasing policy be for students who may study courses not previously offered by the college or at a substantially different level?

- Can reservation fees, fines or any other library charges be waived or adapted to take account of open learning students' needs?

- What equipment will be necessary to run open learning packages? Will students following these courses have priority over other students for use of the equipment?

- If material is to be brought in where will it be stored? If in the library, is a secure cupboard or room necessary?

- Who is responsible for the issue (and return) of material, for re-ordering, and for keeping of necessary records?

- How is the student enrolled? If within the library, are library staff fully aware of enrolment procedures including invoicing and receipt of money?

- How does the student contact his/her tutor? If through the library, do library staff have the necessary information about tutors — such as how, where and when they may be reached?

It will be seen that the library involvement in open learning can be a major contribution to the programme's success within the college. The experience of librarians who have been involved so far has proved of benefit to all concerned — staff, students and college management. There have been other implications. Librarians concerned become increasingly involved with other sections of the institution, outside of what has traditionally been seen by some as their area of operation. They have thus been able to make a greater contribution within the college, and staff in other sections of the institution have become more aware of the facilities, abilities and expertise the learning resources service is able to offer them.

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STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING: SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING RESOURCES PROVISION

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One of the main thrusts of the curriculum development described in Allen Armsby's paper is the shift away from teacher-centred delivery towards flexible learning. It is significant that a Coombe Lodge Report was devoted to student-centred learning resources barely three years ago (FESC 1984a). I hope to complement that report by drawing out some of the practical implications of a student-centred approach and by noting some of the useful contributions to the literature since that report appeared.

WHAT IS STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING?

'It is notorious', writes Heron (1981), 'that academics, who normally would pride themselves on their ability critically to evaluate the assumptions on which a body of theory and practice is based, are so uncritical and unthinking about the educational process which they mediate'. This is an extreme criticism but one which is echoed by the stereotype of traditional FE teaching in a recent paper on study skills: 'a lecturer, chalk and talk, teacher-centred, syllabus bound and exam orientated, dictated or copied notes, aim for the middle pitching of level, rows of desks, benevolently despotic teacher control, one teacher in a classroom at a time, who doesn't have a totally clear idea of what the next teacher is contributing to the course . . ' (Robinson 1986). In trying to

move away from the traditional, teacher-dominated approach deep issues of educational philosophy, as well as many practicalities, are raised. These have been discussed by Noble (1980), Boud (1981), and Clarke (1982).

Cornwall (1981) suggests that there are six hierarchical stages towards student autonomy in which the learner successively determines:

1 the decision to enrol,

2 the pace of study,

3 the mode of study,

4 the study objectives,

5 the assessment methods, and

6 the criteria for success.

The truly autonomous learner is ultimately capable of deciding his own learning needs, planning the means of meeting those needs and deciding the extent of his success. The best of adult, informal, self-directed learning falls within this category. Learning outcomes also have to change following a move towards autonomy. Instead of one teacher-given, black and white, right answer to many problems, the learner can choose and defend many 'positions' in a relativistic world. By this process established epistemologies and views of the world are inevitably challenged. The teacher becomes a facilitator and, as new roles are developed, both teacher and students face doubts and difficulties, as a recent survey of sixth form students and teachers shows (Rudduck & Hopkins 1984).

The preparation of students for these new roles inevitably involves the teaching of a range of skills, particularly those concerned with study and information dissemination. The recent policy statements and new syllabuses emanating from BTEC, the thrust of much of GCSE and TVEI, and the whole basis of new CPVE courses are embodied in documents such as **A basis for choice** (FEU 1982). Information handling is implicit in many of the activities listed in that document; there are clear opportunities for libraries and resources services to play a key role in developing those skills.

STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING: IDEALISM OR NECESSITY?

Resou ce-based project method and assignment-based learning have been

in use for a number of years, often in situations which retain a large element of teacher direction. Flexi-Study, open learning and distance learning have reduced the physical and practical barriers for students, but these may not lead to truly autonomous, student-centred learning. The educational benefits of greater student autonomy should be sought for their own sake, though they are not generally immediately measurable. The 'economic' arguments for greater student-centred learning, on the other hand, may be irresistible.

The use of computerised record systems, such as FEMIS, in college administration, together with unit of resource budgeting in some authorities, makes cross-subsidisation of small teaching groups difficult to justify. The already falling rolls of feeder secondary schools and the projections of student numbers over the next ten years suggest the need for considerable change in 16-19 provision, even with factors such as the extension to two years of YTS. Many minority 'A' level subjects are already under threat. The use of supported self-study, for example, may be the only way to retain a varied and balanced curriculum in smaller colleges. Waterhouse (1983) has suggested a wide range of situations in which supported self-study may help and argues that there are intrinsic educational benefits. Whatever the reason for their introduction, the use of student-centred approaches has clear implications for library and resources services.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING RESOURCES PROVISION

Having defined student-centred learning, I should also make clear what is meant by 'learning resources provision'. This, in a number of colleges, is an integrated service managed by a senior member of staff. It encompasses a traditional, print-based library, a central audio-visual materials collection, an audio-visual equipment pool and production unit, a reprography and print production centre and, possibly, an open-access computing and information technology facility. Some colleges have gone beyond this to develop 'workshop' facilities, particularly for communication and numeracy skills.

The various elements of this provision may have developed separately in both organisational and geographical terms. Each college has to determine its own best structure. Given the active nature of student-centred learning, often requiring simultaneous involvement with diverse media, there are,

however, clear advantages to the user in having an integrated collection of services where materials and information is exchanged freely. Reprography work is often dependent on material in library books, while a point in a text can be usefully illuminated by a set of slides. A better service is likely to result from economies of scale and flexible use of support staff in a larger unit.

However, before discussing facilities, organisation or management, aims and objectives have to be determined. Maltby (1984) suggests a two-pronged thrust for college library services — supporting the curriculum and providing a springboard for lifelong education. Skills teaching is an essential prerequisite for this second 'prong' and requires collaboration between teaching and library staffs working through the needs which arise from the first 'prong' — the curriculum. Much of the success of the library's work is determined by attitudes among teaching staff, by the modes of learning they employ and the example they set in their use of resources facilities. The importance of this partnership between teaching and resources staffs — the essential link which enables the resource providers to respond to the needs of the users knowledgeably and effectively — has been stressed by a number of commentators (Beswick 1977; Clarke 1982; McElroy 1984 and Noble 1980). This link is most effective where the resources service is represented on the academic board and its sub-committees, curriculum development and planning groups, at senior management team meetings and, as far as time will permit, at teaching team meetings. As McElroy stresses, this involvement goes beyond a simple bibliographic checking of book lists for new courses. Resources staff should advise on existing resources, suggest possible learning approaches and help to implement these approaches by themselves teaching appropriate elements and by giving and receiving feedback on how students handle assignments.

In response to recent curriculum developments, college librarians through their professional body, the Library Association, have produced several statements of what they feel library and resources services can and should be offering to student-centred courses such as CPVE and GCSE in terms not only of services but also of curriculum support (LA 1982, 1986a, 1986b). In summary, the college resources manager or librarian needs to be fully involved in the whole process of educational management and, while his/her own personality will have considerable influence on the way he/she carries out this role, the perceived status of this person among the teaching staff will affect his/her ability to do the job. Where the head of resources is

a senior academic, the job will be that much easier. The aims and objectives of the service also need institutional recognition in the form of a written statement approved by the academic board and incorporated into the college's academic plans. In turn, teaching staff need to feel they have a stake in the resources services, not only through receiving a good service — particularly one which supports their own professional development needs — but also through involvement in the management of those services. As well as suggesting new items for stock, teaching staffs' subject knowledge should be used to help in weeding and disposing of old stock. Academic staff should feel able to place their own teaching materials at the disposal of other users and should be able to set up learning situations in the resources areas in which their students feel at ease and able to complete assignments without undue difficulty. (The accommodation needs which arise from this are discussed below.)

The willingness of most librarians to undertake this wider college role is not in doubt. McElroy (1984) speaks for most when he writes:

> 'Good librarianship is more a product of its environment than of its techniques and systems . . . study of the attitudes and professional preferences expressed by librarians in the last 30 years prompts one to the conclusion that today's librarian is more immediately concerned with and more influenced by his working environment and his parent organisation's objectives and problems than before. With a few important exceptions, today's library serves first, and collects, stores, and guards afterwards. This is certainly so in the colleges'.

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Student-centred learning demands active participation in the learning process. This does not exclude the traditional, individual private study so often associated with libraries. Many of the vocationally orientated curricula discussed earlier, however, emphasise communication, interpersonal and group work skills and informal peer group learning. It is for this interaction that, in part, we are training students. Are most college library/resources centres designed or capable of being adapted to cope with this? Failure to provide the right sort of accommodation is likely to build into the day-to-day operation of libraries sources of conflict and frustration for both users and staff. A significant shift towards student-centred learning also suggests that provision of study places may need to rise well above

minimum of one place per 15 FTE students currently recommended for non-advanced further education.

A variety of working (and non-working) environments is required. The silent individual study area is still necessary for many users. This should be separate from the main book and audio-visual collections and from the entrance and counter areas so that distractions are minimal and those wishing to browse are not inhibited by fear of causing disturbance. The main book and audio-visual storage areas can probably accommodate informal study groups with the periodicals and a relaxation area nearby where reasonable levels of conversation are acceptable and assignments can be discussed. A third area, near the main book collections, needs to be provided for 'formal' group work with teaching staff working on library materials alongside their students. Some privacy is necessary for this area so that formal tuition can take place without distraction. Finally lecture/viewing rooms will be required for formal library tuition and group use of audio-visual programmes.

How the library/resources centre is actually used may well be influenced by non-curricular factors. The inadequacy of refectory or student union facilities may force unwilling users into the library during the day, while a lack of a nearby eating and relaxation area or any hot drinks facility may discourage users from staying on into the evening. Some illuminating insights into how sixth form students regard their libraries is given in the survey by Rudduck and Hopkins (1984). The library as 'refuge', as 'sin-bin', as 'base camp', as well as a place to work is familiar to many librarians. The almost equal division of users for and against a strict silence rule, for example, suggests that no library without at least two contrasting working areas adequately meets the needs of its users.

The active nature of the student-centred approach requires both staff and students to have access to the facilities more commonly associated with project work in schools. Large work tables with scissors, paste and coloured pens in abundance, easy access to photocopiers with enlargement and colour facilities, headliners, typewriters, word processors and audio visual video production areas, all supported by technician help and advice, comprise ideal provision. Without it there is little incentive for teaching staff to move to this form of learning, to produce good quality classroom materials or to put together attractive learning packages. As a result, the essentially practical nature of information handling and communication skills is lost for the students.

LEARNING MATERIALS AND THEIR EXPLOITATION

The wide range of traditional further education courses has long presented a considerable challenge to the college librarian. Student-centred approaches increase that challenge. The growing emphasis on reference and information materials arising from BTEC courses has been described by both Palmer (1984) and Alcock (1984). Much of the teaching on business courses is related to current issues; cuttings from newspapers and journals thus become important. There is increasing demand for more specialised business information such as company reports, market surveys and financial data from services such as Extel. College libraries either buy in these sources directly or access them through view data systems such as Prestel. Either option can be expensive. The skills of the specialised commercial library are having to be used to organise this material and this can have a considerable impact on staff time — again a close relationship with subject teachers is vital so that effort is accurately and profitably directed. General reference material, which once was renewed only occasionally, must now be kept constantly up to date. Students required to run a community magazine at a profit, the group working on an actual problem from a local business, or the group planning a trip to London need the latest information — last year's rail timetable will not do!

Encouraging the lifelong desire to profit from books and education demands a different but equally high set of book selection skills together with a commitment to publicise and guide materials to encourage use. Both the Premium Grant YTS trainee and the potential Oxbridge candidate need to be able to find and use attractive and challenging materials in a welcoming atmosphere. In many respects this re-emphasises the skills on which librarians have traditionally prided themselves — selection, organisation and promotion — but librarians still need to adopt an 'innocent eye' occasionally to assess whether what they are doing is really helpful to the user. Despite the work of Buckland (1975) and others on the bibliometrics of making book stock sufficiently available, complaints still abound from students about insufficient copies of basic texts (Rudduck & Hopkins 1984).

GUIDANCE, SKILLS TEACHING AND STAFFING

The importance of skills teaching to the student-centred approach should be self-evident, as should the willingness of most librarians to play their part

in this. Both Cornwall (1981) and Powell (1981) emphasise the importance of preparing students for more autonomy by discussing aims, objectives and methods with them. Recent research into the effectiveness of study skills teaching shows the crucial role of the subject lecturer and the need for skills to be taught in the context of course work rather than as discrete entities (Tabberer and Allman, 1983). Graham Gibbs (1981) has developed the 'supported reflection' approach to skills teaching in which students are encouraged to examine their study methods with their peers. In these situations the librarian must act as consultant and partner to the subject specialist.

There may also be a special role for the librarian. Robinson (1986) suggests that extending study skills teaching within an institution depends on the staff development process above all else and that the librarian is a key member of any study skills working group trying to establish a college initiative. Once teaching staff have received help with skills teaching techniques, they are in a position to adopt a teaching style which gives students greater autonomy. In addition, with the pace of curriculum change, teaching staff too need to become effective autonomous learners. The library resources service plays an indispensable role in organising and disseminating the flood of information and advice to senior management and classroom lecturers from bodies such as the DES, FESC, FEU and MSC.

The implications of all this for staffing are considerable and each librarian/resource manager will make his/her case accordingly. It is not only a question of numbers, although these are important. Some recently suggested staffing minimum formulae allow little prospect of resources services making their full contribution to student-centred learning if they are applied as maxima (FESC 1984b). It is also a matter of recognition for senior library staff and their teaching role. McElroy (1984) summarises as follows:

> 'Only when he teaches, contributes to the academic ends of the college in this narrowest, as well as in the wider sense, shares the working and educational experience of his colleagues, is the librarian (and therefore his library), fully accepted. Acceptance at this level is vitally important, not for petty reasons of personal status and pride, but because that acceptance and recognition bring with it access for the librarian to decision making, policy formulation and resource allocation in the college. This is essential to the favourable development of the library'.

No less important than any formal teaching input from library staff is their on-the-spot guidance to students engaged on assignments. Many students are reluctant to approach a main counter for help, particularly when the person there appears fully occupied with a mountain of routine tasks. Resources staff need time to devote themselves exclusively to the support role (on a rota basis). The automation of housekeeping procedures and the introduction of other technology such as security systems may be the best way of ensuring that there is always at least one person available to help the users.

FUNDING THE EVALUATION

Librarians are notorious for wanting more! But the funding requirements which follow from student-centred learning are inevitable. The emphasis on the 'here-and-now' which underlies much of it demands a greater input in terms of current reference material and journals. The enhanced guidance and teaching activities of library staff, alongside their traditional skills of selection, classification, indexing, display and promotion, put pressure on staffing levels. A shift in emphasis from the formal didacticism of the classroom may necessitate a reallocation of resources.

Coupled with a greater input of resources must go greater accountability. Investment in resources services must always remain in part an act of faith, but librarians who look at their students' examination results can discern some correlation between library use and achievement. This suggests the need for library staff to be involved in student assessment procedures so that feedback can be gathered on the use of resources. Formal output measures are complex to construct and difficult to apply (Blagden, 1980). Library and college managements alike must nevertheless apply themselves to the problem. Harsh, mechanistic approaches may otherwise be forced on colleges, in which scant account will be given to developing lifelong skills or new educational philosophies. The first warning shot has been fired by the Audit Commission:

> 'Libraries in colleges are major enterprises in their own right. The book stock is commonly worth between £1,000,000 and £3,000,000. A five per cent book loss on that size of stock can cost between £50,000 to £150,000 a year. You can educate 80 (FTE) students for less than that . . . During the current audit round, college libraries generally got a fairly cursory glance as the auditors concentrated on

the major cost areas. Also we have not yet had a special study of libraries. Sooner or later they will come under review'. (Sprigg 1986)

Applying the 'rule-of-thumb' measures suggested in the 1984 Coombe Lodge Report (FESC 1984a) would go some way towards determining the quality of assistance colleges are receiving from their resources services.

CONCLUSION

While an adequate funding base is essential if resources services are fully to support student-centred learning, much depends on the relationship between those services and the institution they seek to serve. The involvement of resources staff in the whole teaching/learning process is the key to effective provision.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN COLLEGE LIBRARIES: A SOLUTION LOOKING FOR A PROBLEM

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The subtitle of this paper is merely a device to reflect the attitude of many colleges, even in this so-called 'information age'. Is information technology (IT) of any practical use in the college library, and even if it is, is the college library really the best place for it? What aspects of IT are the most appropriate? What is IT in the context of library and learning resource services, and where do we stand, four years after Information Technology Year?

The answer to these questions is clear. The business of college library and learning resource services is the provision of information to teaching staff, students and college management. It follows from this premise that any tool or technique which helps to locate, present or exploit information in a quicker, more efficient or more complete manner is not only appropriate, but should be actively encouraged. As this is exactly what IT is all about, it is clear that college library and learning resource services are a highly appropriate environment for the use of IT.

Having said this, it is useful to remember that IT is a new and rapidly changing area so current perceptions may well alter within a few years. With this in mind, an outline of the current and changing roles of IT within the college library and learning resource service is pertinent. Firstly, what is IT? Most definitions run something like: 'the use of computers

(especially microcomputers) and modern telecommunications in the storage, retrieval and presentation of information'. This has far-reaching implications for libraries. As Rowley (1980) says: 'There is now no area of librarianship where computers cannot be used to good effect . . .' Let us now examine some of these areas.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN ADMINISTRATION

The two main areas in which IT has shown promise for college library and resource services are IT as an administrative tool, and IT as a learning resource. Many information retrieval and integrated housekeeping software packages have tended to blur the distinction, but the longest established use of IT is for library administration. Computers have long been used to help, especially in the larger libraries, with the time-consuming routine tasks common to all libraries: circulation records, cataloguing, acquisitions and financial management, word processing, and filing tasks of all kinds. The advent of the comparatively cheap microcomputer in recent years has made it possible to extend this help to libraries hitherto excluded by virtue of cost or lack of suitable software.

Modern integrated housekeeping packages (with circulation, cataloguing, acquisitions etc. modules) such as ADLIB 2, Biblio Tech and Class are now available for a wide variety of hardware. These make the most efficient use of library records by enabling a single record for each item to be created, amended, retrieved, reproduced and amalgamated with other records with the minimum of effort. Whereas in the past each of these activities would have demanded the creation of a separate record for each activity, IT enables us, in theory, to perform all these operations upon the one record originally created (either by typing in or from an outside source), e.g. MARC records.

A useful introduction to IT is the OPAC (on-line public access catalogue) facility which enables users to access the computer catalogue and do their own searches. The saving in time and effort with these routine jobs is particularly welcome in the context of low staffing levels and restricted budgets, and, with the help of telecommunications links, multiple site problems are surmountable. IT is most emphatically not a palliative for low staffing levels. Although saving staff time in the long run, IT merely permits staff to access a wider range of information, increase work throughput and eliminate the more tedious tasks such as filing. Librarians

are freed to do more of what they do best: user education, helping users find the information they need, and acting as publicity agents for the library and learning resource service. This role is particularly important in the light of increased student-centred learning.

Restricted budgets may also be a problem in making the best of IT. Despite dramatic reductions in the cost of computing power, cost — especially if telecommunications charges are considered — is still a major problem in most FE (and many HE) college libraries. There are, however, strategies to ease this. Co-operative arrangements, either inter-or intra-college, may help to spread the costs of hardware and of 'set-up' (the cost of staff time in feeding records into the computer). Depending on the position of and relationships with the college computer services, help can be given in terms of shared computing power, loans of equipment and the advantages of bulk buying. Similarly, a local co-operative (mooted at least as far back as 1980 by Bruce Royan), either between colleges (such as the developing arrangements between the HERTIS colleges) or between college and public library (such as the arrangements in the London Borough of Hillingdon), may make the cost of hardware and of setting up library files, either by typing in or by obtaining suitable records from outside agencies, quite acceptable. There can, however, be drawbacks. College buying policies may bring pressure to standardise on computers which are unsuitable for the software the library needs. Shared computing power may mean inconvenient down-times. Co-operative record acquisition may not be possible if libraries in an area already have differing needs, standards and equipment. Nevertheless, the possibilities of co-operation are well worth exploring.

Even where co-operative projects are untenable the problems of a restricted budget could be eased by the introduction of separate 'modules' which make up most integrated library systems. These would help in areas identified as those which could most benefit from IT application, i.e. the most time-consuming or laborious routine tasks. Even the introduction of IT packages already available in the college, such as word processing or financial spreadsheets, may demonstrate the advantages of IT in library administration and encourage its adoption in other areas. This latter approach may help overcome another problem seen in many colleges as IT is introduced. Like many college staff, some library and learning resource staff are still apprehensive about computers and the judicious use of IT applications (such as word processing) that are more obviously useful can help to break down prejudices. Hardware and software unreliability can

also be a problem; the cheaper the equipment, the more unreliable it tends to be. However, provided adequate maintenance arrangements have been made, this need not be a major obstacle.

The need for dedication of a microcomputer to a particular task at any one time can also be a problem. This means that a microcomputer occupied with running a circulation system cannot be printing at the same time, or running a financial package. Workloads have to be timetabled, or a solution in the form of an interconnected but discrete network of microcomputers (a local area network, or LAN) may be a way around this — subject, of course, to increased capital costs.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AS A LEARNING RESOURCE

The other major use of IT within library and learning resources services is as a learning resource in itself. Here the role of the library dovetails neatly with the activities of the teaching staff. The use of computers to automate, and thus make more easily exploitable, the abstracts and indexes to books and journal articles ('on-line searching') is hardly new. What is new is the ability of all libraries with comparatively inexpensive IT equipment to access these databases (the LEXIS law database is one exception to this). The rapid keyword searching facility of these databases makes the gathering of references and compilation of bibliographies (especially with word processing) a much more practical proposition for smaller libraries than it used to be. But these databases are only one aspect of the way IT can be used as a learning resource. The ability to access a wide variety of information, particularly on the viewdata and teletext services PRESTEL and Ceefax/Oracle, is very useful in teaching about IT. Many libraries have one or the other of these services now, even if they don't use the abstracting and indexing databases. One of the beauties of these services is that they provide an easy to use and comparatively cheap introduction to IT for many library users.

The main problem with the use of these databases is still cost, even with PRESTEL in some cases — especially with telecommunications charges. Some libraries and resource centres have got around this by creating their own databases and viewdata services, using programs simulating viewdata, like Edfax. There are also on-line searching simulation programs. All of these help library users become more familiar with the database side of IT, while creation of in-house databases with elements from throughout the

college (or indeed from several local colleges) can also get around the problem of content that the commercial databases can have. Most on-line abstracting and indexing services are not only expensive, but cover information that is generally too high level for most FE colleges, and the viewdata databases are often very superficial in their coverage. These drawbacks may mean that they are not well used. Highly relevant localised systems may alter this.

Library and learning resource services can also take an active part in IT as an educational resource by being a centre (perhaps one of several) for the use of educational computer programs. The long opening hours of libraries provide facilities for using such software for longer periods, and to all-comers, than might be available for more specialised computer-based learning suites or ordinary computer studies rooms. Computer-assisted learning (CAL, or CAI, or CBL, or whatever acronym is currently fashionable) can even be useful within the library user education programme by providing tutorials on catalogue use or classification schemes. It is probably truer to say, however, that libraries tend to have more of a support role in this area.

It has been suggested that the best type of educational package is the simulation or role playing game (Snyder and Palmer 1986). This type of program stimulates interaction between students, as well as between student and computer, and should be used with teaching staff present to control, direct and draw conclusions. For their part libraries can use educational software packages in the same way as books — for reference, practice drills or as a supplement to classroom activity. Teaching staff can then recommend a particular package in the same way they would a particular text. The library and resource centre is certainly the best place for the storage and control of an open access educational software collection, having as it does the experience of circulating and controlling stock of all kinds.

The problem with this area of IT has been the dire lack of really good software, of the right approach and level, and the reluctance of some teaching staff to use it, possibly for these reasons. So many packages are of the boring drill-and-practice type, or are simply chunks of regurgitated text — an electronic book. One glimmer on the horizon is the advent of interactive video and of CD-ROM (compact optical disk read-only memory) which has great possibilities both in storage capacity (typically up to 500 megabytes on one 5¼ inch disk) and in versatility — it will store

data, graphics, moving video sequences and computer simulation programs all on the same disk. It remains to be seen whether this medium will ever realise its potential, bearing in mind the high cost of setting up the packages and the cost of the special combined CD player/computers. A wide range of publishers have seized upon it with enthusiasm. Many directories, indexes and databases — even encyclopaedias — are already available and many more are on the way. It might be claimed that CD-ROM is the new microfiche and that reference books are obsolete but, for reasons that will be outlined later, such a declaration is premature. However, the BBC Doomsday Project and the London University anatomy series give some idea of what can be done with this medium.

Compact optical disks may also replace standard magnetic storage media once it becomes possible to write onto as well as read them. However, be warned, the price at first may be prohibitive. If the cost of this latest IT drops as dramatically as microcomputing did, things may change. Until then, electronic publishing will remain the preserve of the bigger, better funded libraries.

THE ROLE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

So, are we moving to the bookless library? It would be ludicrous to say yes at the present moment. The comparative cost and inflexibility of access of IT as compared to books and conventional audio-visual materials, still means that the latter will be with us for some time. Why is this so? Well, just compare the potential number of individual access points in a library of 40,000 volumes (especially if there are some multiple copies), with the provision of even 20 microcomputers or terminals. To provide the same ease of access would cost a fortune. Nothing yet can rival the sheer portability of the book. But let us not shun IT as irrelevant. It cannot entirely supplant books for the foreseeable future, but it can be a highly useful tool for exploiting all kinds of educational information resources and for training people to exploit these resources themselves. In these ways, IT is responding to needs by adapting technology for library benefit. It cannot be a solution looking for a problem, unless we make it so.

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THE ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES SERVICES

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This is a vast topic. A paper of this length can only highlight some aspects and problems which concern those involved in library and learning resources management.

In the title of this paper the two service areas of learning resources and library are linked. In some colleges this is in fact the case; in others, they are managed separately. A case can be made for either arrangement. We are however, at a point at which technology and the handling of information have become intimately related and the continued separation of the departmental manifestations of these concepts in colleges is hard to defend. The objectives of the units are based on service to their clientele and the processes are similar. These include the centralisation of materials to make them more widely available, the organisation of materials to facilitate access, and the provision of skilled specialists to optimise exploitation. It is easy for academic staff and students to be aware of the provision of learning resources without perceiving clearly the underlying relationships. The difference between a journal and a videotape are easier to see than their similarities. Bringing the materials together can be a major step towards better resource provision and heightened understanding and benefits for users. Thompson (1985) attempts to list the advantages and disadvantages of united and separate libraries and resources units, but finds only advantages in the merged unit:

'The separation of the library and audio-visual production service leads to a diminution of the role of the library, a wasteful and dangerous state of affairs at a time of economic recession . . .'

However, in many colleges, libraries are recognised as closely serving the needs of their institution by organising and exploiting learning resources of every type from computer tapes to videos, books to Prestel.

While the objectives and processes can be described as similar, the facilitators of learning resource services and libraries have tended to evolve through different routes. Librarians have been traditionally concerned with printed information while learning resource personnel are often educational technologists more familiar with the medium of transmission. Now, however, the library's information is often stored, transmitted and retrieved by using the media of the educational technologist. The roles are converging. In view of this convergence, while both retain their distinct expertise, it may be educationally and economically more effective for their management to be integrated.

INFORMATION SKILLS

As styles of education change and become more student-centred, the objectives, or at least the responsibilities, of library and learning resources departments are widening. The library has become a sort of knowledge laboratory with educational technology providing the tools for information transfer. Students are learning to assimilate, to evaluate and to understand, rather than simply to reiterate. It is no longer sufficient to be directed to the relevant text. Learners need the skills that will make them informationally independent, not only in the location of data in all its forms but in its critical assessment.

One implication of all this is that these skills need to be disseminated and that means, in the first instance, to the teaching staff of colleges. It is unrealistic to imagine that the current level of information skills teaching provided by libraries is sufficient. The new curricula require that information skills must become an integral feature of courses for all students. Librarians, with their long experience of teaching information skills, have an expanding role to play, not only with students, but in staff development of colleagues.

A major difficulty confronting librarians concerns the place of their service within the British educational context. As has been pointed out in a report from the Office of Arts and Libraries (1984), schools are failing to capitalise on their library and learning resources departments. This is not surprising. Daniels (1983) has shown that, in some schools, as little as 70 minutes a week are available to the school librarian. The Office of Arts and Libraries' report found that only around seven per cent of librarians in secondary schools in England and Wales will be qualified as such. This is not the place to argue this particular issue, but it has to be mentioned because of its significance to colleges. The library provides materials and an environment for learning within a tacit contract with the student. While in the classroom exist the direct pedagogic skills of the teacher and the sanction of assessment with which to claim the attention of those taught, the library has no such strident voice. Its clients have passed through a school system which barely acknowledges libraries and resource centres. They arrive quite unequipped to exploit the college library and keep their side of the contract. To compound this, timetabling arrangements often fail to provide opportunities to make good the missing skills and there is strong evidence of the effect of this deficiency. Research in Britain (Risman, 1976) found that 16 per cent of undergraduates never used the library and 35 per cent never borrowed a book. Further research by Martin (1985) has shown that this phenomenon may be encouraged by academic staff. In her study the students were found to begin their courses expecting to study more independently than their tutors were prepared to let them. She quotes a male student:

'I was surprised that you could get away with just using a set text. I'd imagined I'd have been expected to be in the library digging around there for myself much more'.

One outcome of such research is to call into question the value of the library to the success of a college.

STANDARDS

For these reasons the profession is learning how to evaluate itslef. (See Chambers' paper in this report.) A recent paper by Biggs (1986) is a useful starting point in exploring the area of evaluation, which is notoriously difficult when applied to service organisations such as libraries. It is essential that librarians have the opportunity to market their service and

receive information from the academic board and other committees. Without this libraries are hamstrung and will find themselves not only without a formal place to be heard but also without the knowledge of institutional activities and objectives necessary to plan the service.

Library and learning resources provision in academic institutions varies enormously. This in itself makes academic staff more ready to accept poor levels of service. In institutions where service is poor there is a tendency for the department to be held in low esteem and, as a consequence, to attract limited support from colleagues. This is the vicious circle in which many poorly resourced library and learning resources departments find themselves. Breaking this circle requires reference to an authority outside the institution, in other words to mandatory standards of provision. Quite simply, there are none. The Library Association publishes guidelines for schools (1977) and for colleges (1982). Visits by HMIs have not proven useful in monitoring standards of library and learning resources services. It is rare for a professional librarian to be included in a visiting team and, even where problems are identified, HMI reports tend to be tentative and not specific. Neither are validating bodies as searching as new styles of teaching require them to be, concerning resources. College accreditation in the American regional board style may be one answer. Prescriptions are not as difficult to find as is the readiness to implement them.

MULTI-SITE COLLEGES

According to Ashworth (1976), 'Multi-sitis is a serious complaint with no complete cure other than drastic surgery'. Since those words were uttered automated library systems have developed which offer something of a painkiller if not a cure. Nevertheless, much of what was true then holds good today. Single-site libraries are simpler to organise, absorb less time co-ordinating their affairs, do not require the expensive duplication of basic reference stock and are generally more efficient. Whatever arcane reason has made mergers between colleges fashionable, they cause problems for library and learning resources services either in merging two previously independent services or in expanding and 'splitting' an existing unit — often with insufficient funds.

Ashworth considered that the existence of more than one site offered the classic conditions for the breakdown of the management system. His antidote was to be found in 'organic' management techniques which

enjoyed something of a vogue in the 1970s. This excellent and humane style of management can have limited relevance in the smaller and often severely understaffed FE college. The administrative time absorbed in liaison between sites, the duplication of expensive security systems, the co-ordination of practice and the cumbersome decision-making structure, with its burden of communication, will handicap the management of the library and learning resources department.

Some relief for the difficulties of 'multi-sitis' and the repetitive work of libraries can come from the automation of 'housekeeping' functions — the issue system, the catalogue or accessions for example. Potential benefits include faster issue and return of materials, automatic generation of overdue and recall notices, and the release of staff time for increased reader assistance. Even more important is the management information which can be produced easily, and which helps the librarian make more effective decisions in, for example, stock control, budget allocation and staffing. The librarian can also supply the institution with reports on present activities or future plans based on documented facts about how the unit is functioning. This sort of information is all the more important with the present stress on unit costing and performance measures.

NEW LEARNING RESOURCES

New learning resources evolve constantly. On-line retrieval and videodiscs are two examples. These two technologies, and their successors, are going to make a profound impact on the way information is handled, and therefore managed. Changes will occur in storage requirements, technical backup, study accommodation and teaching styles.

On-line retrieval is simply the provision of data or bibliographic information from a distant database via a telecommunications system using a terminal.

The miracle of this system is less to do with the technology and more to do with the sound economic sense that it can offer. Put simply, access to the files of an on-line 'host' can allow a college library to cancel hard copies of those files, yet broaden its bibliographic base by allowing access to files previously considered too peripheral to justify purchase. Take as an example the index **Library and information science abstracts** which costs £134 in hard copy. It is of some interest to a college with teacher education

or certain BTEC courses, for locating articles on school libraries or reading surveys. The hard copy would perhaps be searched seriously five or six times a year in such an institution. Half a dozen on-line searches of the file at about £5 each would give a total cost of some £30, an annual saving of £100, while the searches have been made faster and more effective.

While information is clearly the domain of the library, the equipment and the principles are those of educational technology, in the purview of a resources department. As librarians retrieve information they use the equipment of the information technologist. Students benefit on two levels: they get their subject data and become familiar with a powerful information delivery system. It is not possible to predict with any certainty how important on-line will become even within a decade, but it has already had a major impact on banking, travel, the motor industry and the Stock Exchange. Its impact on college libraries will be increasingly to enlarge their potential by giving access to files previously available only to the largest libraries while saving money and space. The library is not only a store of information but a gateway to a world-wide network of stores. The manager, armed with information on usage levels from his own computer system, will be increasingly concerned with the choice between purchasing an item or providing access to it. The role of the librarian as intermediary between user and storage media will be greatly expanded.

STAFF: STATUS AND SALARIES

Integrating a staff in which huge disparities exist in terms of rewards only tenuously related to qualifications, skills and input is a major management problem. In many colleges the disparity between salaries has been imposed by the management structure of the organisation, for example where the head of resources is an academic and the librarian holds an administrative post. Since the lowest Burnham salary scale extends into senior officer scales of the National Joint Council the head of resources is likely to be more highly paid, and therefore deemed to be the senior. He/she is often given over-all responsibility for the joint service on this quite inappropriate criterion. In addition to this tension the amalgamation of all learning resources with the library places in close juxtaposition personnel with very varied skills and qualifications. While this is potentially fruitful, it is also demanding. As Thompson (1985) says:

'A mutual understanding and appreciation by librarians, educational technologists and technicians of their various roles is of vital importance'.

Finding and keeping good staff, especially technicians, is hampered by the inequitable way in which they are rewarded. Provision for professional development through courses and a career structure is as important as salary. With a little imagination opportunities can be provided for all staff to contribute to decision making. Library assistants and technicians can provide valuable feedback from clients, which can then be incorporated in keeping, say, the loans policy relevant. Library and learning resources managers should recognise this and create the opportunity to receive these contributions regularly and responsively.

As has been stated above, it is imperative that the librarian takes a full part in the academic life of the college. In a recent, unpublished survey in the West Midlands (Marley & Hyde 1986) only eight of 34 college librarians had full Burnham conditions of service, the rest having modified Burnham, hybrid or NJC conditions. It must be difficult for these librarians to perform their plainly academic function in this situation.

The unions, NATFHE and NALGO, refute the local authorities' definition of a teacher as one who has a fully timetabled teaching commitment. They offer instead the prescription that the work should be of a predominantly educational nature. The growth of student-centred learning, and the emphasis this places on the library and learning resources unit as a learning environment, makes this last statement highly significant for the professional organisation of this environment is assuming a major role. It already has its place as a valid and important procedure in the learning process. It is equally important that the library's skilled personnel stand alongside the traditional lecturing staff as facilitators of comparable status. The demands of the new curricula mean that librarians, as well as departmental lecturers, are facilitators of learning — convergence of roles again.

CONCLUSION

The library and learning resources department is a mixture of change and continuity; a traditional book collection which has evolved to include all learning resources, added to innovative technology. The library seeks to support the teaching of its parent body with its provision. Its mistakes or omissions are costly to the college both in financial and success rate terms. They are best avoided by ensuring the availability of adequate professional, clerical and technician staff, appropriately paid and supported; facilities

that conform to published standards; and proper funding. Above all, staff from the library and learning resources department must be involved in the course and management committees of the college in order to contribute and to respond. It should be realised that the best resources in the world cannot compensate for their users' inability to find or use them. Awareness of information skills will percolate through to the students only if all staff promote them. Time and effort spent in generating competence here will pay dividends and are essential tools in the new curricula.

The evolution of new learning resources, the convergence and change in learning resources personnel roles facilitated by new technology and the crucial importance of student-centred learning are all combining to provide a great challenge for learning resources managers.

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STAFFING AND FUNDING OF LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES SERVICES

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Librarians argue that the library has an important role in helping a college achieve its objectives. They are supported by many less obviously partial bodies, e.g. DES, CNAA, NATFHE. This suggests that the library should be viewed as an integral part of the institution, that it should be closely involved in developing 'new initiatives' (here connoting such influences as student-centred learning, open learning, information technology, BTEC, TVEI, CPVE, GCSE, MSC *et al.*) and that its resource needs should be reviewed by colleges implementing such programmes.

Such initiatives have already been developed in many institutions. Their impacts include reduced class contact hours, more student-centred learning, and the need for individual research skills. All of these bring more staff and students to the library, more frequently. But it is less easy to identify consideration given to the library by colleges and funding bodies in respect of resources and participation in planning. As a result the library's full potential may not be realised; it may be prevented from serving students and college to the fullest extent.

If libraries are to support students properly and provide colleges with maximum value for money, librarians should be involved in planning curricular developments as a member of relevant college committees. The library is one of the institution's principal learning resources and the librarian thus requires an intimate knowledge of the direction of development to permit assessment of its impact on the library, and to advise

the college's decision-making bodies of these and the resulting resource needs. This is a wholly managerial, communications related issue and is cost free. Yet it is crucially important to the proper development of library and learning support services and the best use of resources.

There are other issues which clearly do have cost implications. It is desirable that the library develop into a comprehensive resource centre (McElroy 1984), providing a wide range of materials and associated hardware, and that it be staffed by people with expertise to organise and exploit such resources, and to provide users with information gathering skills. The service must be adequately staffed and funded if new initiatives are to prosper and students benefit. Much has been written about student-centred learning and its capacity for freeing students from classrooms and formal lectures. This may offer a resource saving, but some of that saving must be ploughed back into an improved learning resource environment. The library is the principal focal point of that environment. Real savings to the institution may remain.

External financial restraints may impede some developments that colleges would like, but improvements can still be made. This paper attempts to help colleges answer such questions as:

- Is the library adequately financed to provide the increased resource support required by students engaged on new initiatives?
- Is it adequately staffed with the right sort of people?
- Is it adequately involved in and informed of the development process?

Such questions are difficult to gauge, and agreement difficult to obtain. Several bodies have published considered advice: the Library Association (LA) and NATFHE agree on salaries and conditions of service for librarians (LA 1987) and are broadly agreed on desirable roles and numbers (LA 1982, NATFHE 1982); the Further Education Staff College has published a discussion of these issues (FESC 1984). It is imprudent merely to dismiss such guidelines as unrealistic, though local situations may deny establishments the opportunity to implement their recommendations fully. Guidelines are an admittedly partial expression of received professional opinion, but a national body has backed them with its reputation. They are

much more than a one-sided exercise in axe-grinding and have their origins in rigorous debate, professional judgement, and acknowledgement of good existing practice. Much of the derision directed at guidelines hides inadequate provision which managements are unwilling to acknowledge.

STAFFING

The quality of professional staff is fundamental to success in any library. Staff select and make available suitable resources and provide enquiry and other access services. They need access to information about college developments and must be able to keep abreast of trends in both librarianship and education. Apart from building and major computer development, both of which are occasional, distinct events, expenditure on staff is the library's greatest single cost. It is therefore particularly important to ensure that their expertise is used to the full.

'Adequate staffing' implies continuing review of both numbers and quality and appropriate structure, policies, salaries, and conditions of service which attract the right people and set them in an appropriate relationship to others in the college, and to its managerial and academic development mechanisms.

Library Association guidelines (LA 1982) present the case for the library's role in the college, citing the librarian's contribution to academic board and other committees, the impact of more student-centred learning on the library, students' demand for resources, and the library staff's involvement in teaching information skills. The guidelines relate these factors to staff and financial resource needs and suggest that the number of library staff should be set as a ratio to FTE students, considering also the level of work taught in the institution. A ratio is proposed in the range 1:80 to 1:100 FTE in polytechnic and similar colleges, moving to 1:250 FTE in small colleges doing little or no advanced work. The proportion of professional to non-professional staff is set in a range of 3:2 to 2:3. Timetabling considerations would appear to require at least four staff in even the smallest establishment if service is to be provided at all times. Multi-site locations require more staff. These proposals derive from quantitative and qualitative surveys of existing good practice.

A survey carried out by the Library Association (LA 1985), and reported by Bulpitt (1985), revealed that a majority of libraries had one-two

professional staff and one-three non-professional staff, though eight per cent had no professional librarian. The ratio of staff to students indicated that smaller colleges (to Grade 4) are staffed at levels approaching LA guidelines, but larger FE colleges have much higher library staff: FTE ratios (Group 5, 1:293; Group 6, 1:374: Group 7, 1:421). A Welsh Office Education Department Survey (Roberts 1984) described staffing as 'woefully inadequate'.

LA and NATFHE recommend that professional staff be appointed to academic posts in recognition of the nature of the work and to assist the library to function properly. In larger colleges the library may be a department on its own; in smaller establishments it may be part of a general learning resource provision. Whatever the scale, the staff structure should offer librarians specific roles and some flexibility, with opportunity for professional development. Salary scales, by the nature of the job, should be academic. Non-professional staff should be on appropriate NJC scales (LA 1987).

Chief librarians need close involvement with curricular development and should sit with, or have direct access to, the college's management team. They should be members of academic board and other committees where major decisions are made, and help co-ordinate the college learning resources strategy, with due regard to curricular content and teaching methodology. The CET statement (Donovan 1986) on management of information technology offers useful comment. Chief librarians must understand the academic objectives of the college, have a working relationship with lecturers and management, and expertise to suit library facilities to college needs and policies.

Other professional staff also have academic roles, with responsibilities and supervisory tasks associated with selection and presentation of stock and development of services. They may work as subject specialists, tutor librarians etc. The teaching role includes staff training as well as user education where users become acquainted with multi-media resources, equipment, and information skills.

Non-professional staff may undertake routine tasks, but they are often the first point of contact with users and require good interpersonal and communication skills. Technicians assist with reprographic services, maintain equipment, and assemble media resources.

Number and grading of staff apart, their adequacy to support new initiatives should be considered. What impacts are forecast? Are more staff needed? Would redefinition of job descriptions suffice? If new staff are required, what qualities and experience are sought? Are library staff aware of curricular changes in the establishment? Do they have access to course planning meetings? Is further training required? Can the library contribute to training teaching staff? Opportunities for staff development and training within the college and through professional bodies outside the college should be available to all staff, as commended by FEU (1986a).

A recent informal survey on staffing and funding for the new initiatives, taken from 25 college librarians from all parts of the UK, revealed that three had had staff changes in recognition of work on these initiatives, 22 had not; of these, 11 had had changes for reasons other than the new initiatives; three had had a decrease in staffing, six an increase. The main initiatives considered related to YTS or information technology. In addition, the LA survey (1985) showed that though 75 per cent of colleges were involved with MSC courses, only seven per cent had appointed extra library staff and made funds available.

Many courses, such as GCSE and CPVE, have student-centred approaches, requiring skills in retrieving and presenting information that relate to a variety of media. This implies knowledge of indexes to periodicals, videos, audio cassettes, computer software, databases such as Prestel, teletex and videotex. Demand for information covers a wide range of topics, so librarians and users need to be familiar with outside sources of local and national information including central resource services such as MARIS and Information Technology Centres. The librarian contributes to the concept of education for life by teaching these transferable skills.

Professional librarians have the knowledge to present modules serving the objectives implied here, but it may be necessary to redefine job descriptions and re-allocate staff to priority areas such as computerisation and user education, both within the library, and from other subject areas to the library. Skills in communication, user education, audio-visual resources, computerisation, and awareness of new curricular developments are at a premium. Raddon (1984) presents a concise view of considerations needed in re-allocating and recruiting new staff.

FUNDING

If the library is to act as a core resource provider for new initiatives, what will it cost and where will funds come from? A Further Education Staff College Working Paper (Cuthbert 1979) assesses problems of finding precise criteria for costing in tertiary education.

All staff in educational establishments are aware of restraints on finance. Funds must be seen not to be wasted; cash must be spent wisely and allocated fairly to the benefit of all staff, students, and the community at large. FEU, discussing CPVE (1986b), identified science as requiring a larger share of resources and existing library funds, but gave little consideration to the additional funds that libraries need to cope with increased use in real terms, irrespective of discipline. With the introduction of GCSE, a need for extra resources was recognised and an additional £20m provided. How much should establishments direct towards their libraries?

Questions for debate are:

- Is the college adequately funded?
- Is an agreed proportion allocated to the library?
- When developing new curricula, some needs can be financed from existing funds if obsolete courses are replaced, but extra funds are required for the new initiatives. What funds are available? Can these be guaranteed? How secure are they? How will they be spent?
- Do those spending the resources, the librarians, know when and what funds are available? Are they involved in planning? If so, how?
- Are they able to contribute to discussions on major committees?

Colleges should recognise that while subject departments may attract courses and resources, the students they enrol use central facilities as well as those of the parent department. Libraries are not alone in being affected; registrars and computer managers signal similar problems. These problems are real; colleges need more sophisticated and secure mechanisms for

directing a proper share of resources towards these areas.

Librarians should be invited to prepare estimates, in accord with agreed objectives, and review and defend these with management and other senior colleagues. Yet one still hears of librarians being 'told' what the allocation is to be, and meekly accepting it. Proposal, discussion, amendment, and agreement offer better value. Revill (in McElroy 1984) notes that colleges should develop a view of the level at which their library should normally be funded, so that long-term planning may be consistent and some protection be afforded in recession. Lack of continuity in funding is a severe problem for libraries, which have heavy continuing commitments to, for example, journals.

Factors which colleges may consider in assessing financial provision are: size of college (FTE students); average book price; and the inflation factor (for many years, book and journal prices have risen much more steeply than RPI); the amount of advanced work; the size and use made of existing stocks; planned changes in the course profile and teaching philosophy of the institution. Other factors are: new libraries require special funding during their first five years to approach a viable size; the cost of book lists provided by examining bodies; support for established courses must be maintained while developing new stock for new courses.

No establishment is self-sufficient in resources, so libraries draw upon and contribute to other resource centres, local and national. This is cost effective but not cost free. Directories and bibliographies must be purchased, and indexes created to provide access to what is available. These services extend to other resource centres, some of which provide teaching packages for loan or purchase, e.g. CIMTECH for TVEI, MARIS. As the need grows to obtain information from elsewhere, money may be needed for computerisation. Terminals may provide low-cost links with local library and international network databases. Just as books are useful, so viewdata, software and CAL packages, with appropriate equipment, should be available in the library. It may be desirable to computerise the circulation of library stock, to reduce clerical tasks and improve access to material.

Provision of audio-visual and other media may be extended, from in-house produced material to commercial items. LA suggests that some 10 per cent of library funding may be devoted to these. It is useful to earmark resources for such development in earlier stages; later, collection development may

return to a subject base of organisation, the medium being irrelevant to the purchase decision.

Libraries are generally thought of as buying books, but the above implies essential spending on maintenance of equipment, renewing damaged software, stationery requirements for resource centre housekeeping and provision of in-house production of material. Costs are incurred for photocopying, computer accessories, cassettes, videos, OHP sheets, chemicals, films, bulbs, batteries etc. Capital expenditure is needed for initial purchase of equipment, and later, for a rolling programme of replacement, if the quality of support to students is not to decline over time. Security systems require capital expenditure and maintenance, but in reducing losses save greater expenditure on replacements. Centralised cataloguing of resources can reduce unnecessary duplication, and consequently unnecessary expenditure, but this too needs funding, as well as human resources.

Conventional funding is provided through LEAs and student fees, but colleges now draw on additional sources. Are these consistent and reliable for ensuring development and maintenance of resource centres? Megson and Baber (1986) provide a checklist of sources of funds. Funds available from the DES include PICKUP, Education Support Grants, REPLAN, INSET, and special grants for special projects. Other sources include the Home Office for ethnic minorities' related projects, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Equal Opportunities Commission. The European Social Fund is especially interested in IT development; trusts, charities, foundations, business and industrial sponsorship may also be used.

The MSC has a great impact on colleges and is a source of funds for certain projects within libraries, e.g. conversion of stock prior to computerisation. The LA survey (Bulpitt 1985) showed that 75 per cent of colleges were involved with YTS, Adult Training Strategy and Open Tech, but only 25 per cent of libraries had received support directly from MSC funds and few of these for more than one financial year. Most had used the funds for stock; 18 colleges had bought video and microcomputer equipment for student use. Although funds may now be absorbed into college budgets and used indirectly for libraries, colleges should review the rigour of the internal processes which decide how much of any given resource is allocated to libraries and other college-wide learning support systems.

Colleges should ensure that their planning processes facilitate communication between management and resource providers, otherwise they risk people being inadequately informed of funding available. This is a real problem, verified by the informal survey mentioned above: of 25 librarians asked if they were aware of extra funds, 11 responded 'Yes', nine 'Sometimes', and four said 'No'.

CONCLUSION

College managements and funding bodies should be aware of the library's potential role in support of new initiatives and other developments. Libraries can do much to aid students. Such current trends as the shift towards student-centred learning, education for life, and information skills, have direct implications for libraries and the demand likely to fall on them. But the library has needs that should be satisfied if benefits from these programmes are to be assured. It should be adequately staffed and funded, with due regard to the implications of the curricular requirements of courses and the weight of demand; here, colleges may find LA and NATFHE guidelines helpful. Equally important, if the library is to play its part properly, it should be represented on major decision-making committees, contributing to the educational development of the college, and thus able to tailor its stock, services, and use of resources to these plans.

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EVALUATING THE COLLEGE LIBRARY: IS IT WORTH IT?

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An examination of the professional literature of librarianship (Brockman 1984, Layzell 1982, Roberts 1984) shows that there is nothing new in the idea of evaluation of college library services[1]. The good librarian instinctively questions whether the library — its staff, materials and services — is meeting the needs of the college. The majority of librarians already systematise this activity to some degree through the collection of statistics on use, obtaining the views of users through the formal channels of college committees as well as informal personal contact and, increasingly, by monitoring the use made of specific services and presenting an annual report to the college's academic board. Many, particularly in the polytechnics, have introduced sophisticated management techniques for the measurement of their staff and services in order to optimise the use of scarce staff time, to examine the efficiency of staff and services and to create a more scientific formulation of expenditure proposals. In many cases, librarians' thinking has been in advance of that of the parent institution and funding authority, which, in common with the whole public sector, has based its budgetary processes largely upon the formula of historic cost plus inflation. Libraries have long expected to receive the critical scrutiny of HM Inspectorate, CNAA review panels and BTEC moderators and have become accustomed to the collection of information on their services and to providing background descriptive papers.

1 Throughout this paper the term 'library' should be understood to embrace the many differing forms of organisation of learning resources of which the library as such may be only a component.

The emphasis of this work and these inspections has been concerned almost exclusively with quantitative measurement, however, tending to concentrate upon technique and (with the exception of some CNAA reviews and, more recently, HM Inspectorate) making little systematic attempt to measure quality.

A new dimension has been given to these activities by the value for money studies of the Audit Commission (1983, 1985), the funding methodology of the NAB, the increasing financial involvement of the MSC in further education and the introduction by some LEAs of unit cost budgeting for further education. While the effects have been less traumatic in those institutions accustomed to defending their budgets against cuts and providing detailed justifications for proposals for new expenditure, there has been a new focus to resource planning throughout the whole of public sector further and higher education. Cost has now largely replaced desirability as the principal criterion for acceptability.

It is proper — indeed, necessary — to question the mechanistic accounting framework adopted by the Audit Commission and to suspect the motives behind the progressive transfer of curriculum control to the MSC. However, in the long run, it is likely that the Audit Commission and others will have performed a valuable function by spurring colleges to examine their operations and to answer the questions which are at the heart of a true evaluation of their services. In this way can be created the clearly defined sense of purpose and achievement which are necessary to justify costs and even their existence. Librarians should constantly be asking questions such as:

- Why are we doing this?
- What do we hope to achieve?
- Who will benefit?
- What is the cost of doing it?
- Are we doing it efficiently?
- Are we doing it effectively?
- Can we achieve the same results in another less costly or more efficient way?
- How much will it cost to become more effective?
- What will be the effect of not doing so?

Colleges — and their librarians — should not resist or resent the trend towards greater scrutiny of their activities, provided always that the procedures themselves are satisfactory and are soundly based on educational as well as cost criteria. Recent studies show that the education service is indeed anxious to establish its own agendas for evaluation rather than have them imposed. (Hamilton 1977, Challis 1983, FESC 1985, Theodossin 1986). Librarians also — as individuals, through their professional association at conference and in research projects (Oldman & Wills 1977, Allred 1980, Oldman 1982) — are demonstrating the will to break away from the view that 'it cannot be done' or 'we should not do anything until we are told what to do'. Instead moves are being made towards the climate that encourages colleges, local authorities and external assessors to look beyond inputs and outputs and ask not only 'what are you doing?' but also 'how well are you doing it?'.

The crux of the exercise lies, of course, in the establishment of objective measures of quality in the context of non-profit, service organisations[2] (Orr 1973, Buckland 1982). College managements, all too conscious of the difficulty of reconciling externally imposed SSRs with effective teaching structures for their departments, will be equally aware that the lack of even these less than satisfactory ratios makes assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of their libraries still more problematical. The inherent problems are, moreover, magnified in many colleges by a lack of perception of, or unwillingness to recognise, the role of libraries in the radically changed learning environment of further and higher education. Despite the exhortations of professional associations, trade unions and others (Donovan 1981, LA 1982, NATFHE 1982) and the educational theory underpinning their statements, it is, sadly, the case that all too many principals, heads of department and lecturers still see libraries as peripheral to the main function of their colleges. All too many external validators still fail to ask appropriate questions when they meet learning resource staff and, even more sadly, some college librarians still have a blinkered vision of their place in the educational structure of their colleges.

WHAT IS EVALUATION?

What, then, is meant by the term 'evaluation' as applied to college

2 A current research project based on the City of London and Hatfield Polytechnics is investigating methods of costing library provision related to the needs of individual courses.

libraries? It is emphatically not solely the collection and listing of statistics, however important that may be. Purely quantitative information on staff numbers, expenditure on materials, size of stocks, number of loans is, at best, interesting; in isolation, it is, however, a part of the numbers game which equates quantity with quality and views the acquisition of resources as an end in itself and not as a means to an end. Inputs are important, of course, and surveys by the Library Association demonstrate how poorly resourced many FE college libraries are (LA 1986). It is unlikely that a resource starved library can be a good one, but a well provided library is not necessarily effective. The beginning of the answer to the question relates back to the earlier statements about defining a sense of purpose — what are we trying to do? Construction of an evaluative framework for the library must, as the 1983 and 1984 FESC study conferences recognised (Marsh 1984), begin outside the library and a significant part of the process must concern persons other than those working in the library.

It is a truism that the library's services should reflect the needs of the college. But does the college know what it is trying to do, and how, in the detail that will give expression to policy statements on, for example, instructional methods, staff research or involvement with open learning? Until it does, the institution and its library can only approximate the nature and level of learning support services required and can make no attempt to assess effectiveness. It is like trying to judge whether British Rail is getting there without knowing where passengers wish to travel, where trains are supposed to be going and at what time they are supposed to arrive.

There is generalised obeisance to the dictum that a college must have a library because it is more efficient to have a central service for the loan of materials and for providing facilities for private study. Beyond this, however, is frequently an expectational vacuum, filled partly by the librarian, who provides services which are appreciated by those staff and students who are aware of them, but this service is often based upon the librarian's professional experience and knowledge of what should be available rather than upon dialogue between the librarian and the rest of the college, in which the latter states its requirements. If this point has been exaggerated, it is solely to highlight and emphasise the need for the college and its library to enter into a semi-contractual arrangement wherein the college specifies its expectations of the library in relation to and as part of, the achievement of its own objectives and, by implication or explicitly, undertakes to provide the necessary resources. The need is, of course, for a statement of aims and objectives which is sufficiently flexible to adapt to

changing needs and new developments but also sufficiently specific to allow the regular and systematic assessment of whether the services are contributing efficiently and effectively to the college's objectives.

EVALUATION CONTENT: WHO DECIDES?

Clearly, each college will determine its library's objectives and priorities according to the type and level of services it decides are required or it wishes to be provided. It will be guided in these decisions by the advice of its librarian and external recommendations on best practice, but educational considerations must be paramount since the effective modern college library is an instrument for the achievement of educational objectives. These educational considerations will find expression in a number of ways but most will, in their detail, relate the levels of performance expected from the library to the requirement that students should be able to learn effectively in order to achieve stated course objectives. Most college terms last between 10 and 13 weeks and, in that time, a student can pass through a large section of a course of study. It thus becomes reasonable on educational grounds to stipulate that 90 per cent of new materials should be available for use within 14 days of receipt from the supplier, that the reservations service should satisfy 80 per cent of requests within 14 days and that information services should provide at least an interim answer to all requests within 24 hours. Similarly the policy on the duplication of materials and length of loan should (taking account of the needs of part time students in particular) ensure that 75 per cent of required materials is available for immediate use. (These measures are examples from a particular service situation.)

Having set the parameters it is possible to determine the staffing and other resources required and to compile the agenda for a substantial part of evaluation; indeed, any assessment of library services which does not use statements of the performance expected from the system will be so innocuous as to be almost irrelevant. Measurement and regular reporting of performance are an essential part of evaluation. They oblige the librarian and the college to itemise the resources used for each activity and to discover how they are being used. This sounds a fearful task until one considers that, between them, librarian and college administration already have the majority of the statistical information required. The additional effort of analysis, presentation and discussion allows any college to monitor its library's practices and procedures for efficiency and, further, to assess

the effectiveness of its services in terms of how far they are achieving pre-stated objectives.

The following illustrates the type of process that is suggested. They are examples: fuller lists were compiled by the participants of the 1983 and 1984 FESC conferences (Marsh 1984) and are under discussion by the CoFHE Group of the Library Association as part of its revision of guidelines for college library services. It is hoped, however, that these examples will give the flavour of the exercise.

Users

How many staff and students from each department enrolled with the library last year? What were the total staff and student numbers in each department? How can we ensure that they are aware of the services on offer and encourage them to use them.

Why are students in department X not enrolling? Is there evidence to suggest that their learning was impaired by not using the library or that they would have achieved better if they had used the library?

How many external users were enrolled last year? What was the cost of providing services to them? How much income did they generate? Why do they wish to use our library? Is there evidence to suggest that their use of the library was at the expense of college users?

Usage

How many books, videos and other learning materials were borrowed last year? What was the in-house use of materials? Were these an increase or decrease in per capita use over the previous year? Why?

Who borrowed the materials? Is there any reason (which is not self-evident) why students on course A borrow more books on average than those on course B?

Why did staff in department Z borrow so little? Does the library stock not meet their needs? Do they have a concealed departmental collection? If so, would it be more cost effective to transfer resources to the library?

How many reservations did the library handle last year? What was the performance of the service? How many staff hours were required for the

service and how much did it cost? Was there evidence that students' course work was held up through having to wait for materials? How much would it cost in staff time to improve performance? Would it be more cost effective to purchase additional copies of materials?

Accommodation

How many study places were available in the library? What was the occupancy rate at different times of day/days of week/periods of the year? Was there any reason for peaks and troughs? Was there evidence that student learning was impaired through inability to find a study place at peak times? Did lecture schedules have any bearing on the question?

What other accommodation could be made available? Would it be effective?

What is the cost of keeping the library open in the evenings and/or on Saturdays? What would be the loss/gain of educational benefit from a reduction/increase in opening hours?

The library within the college

What was the total cost of the library last year? What was this as a percentage of total college expenditure? What was the cost per student? How do these compare with external recommendations? How do these compare with other, roughly equivalent, colleges? Were there special reasons why expenditure should be higher/lower than elsewhere?[3].

Over all, is the library meeting its aims and objectives? Are there problems *vis-a-vis* particular services or particular courses? What would be the cost of raising levels of performance to meet objectives or to solve specific problems?

BEYOND NUMBER CRUNCHING

Many of the questions are those recommended by the Audit Commission

3 An attempt by the Centre For Interfirm Comparison, 1983 **Inter-library comparisons in academic libraries**. British Library Research and Development Department Report 5763, to produce regular comparative information foundered on inter-institutional differences in resource allocation and functions.

but it will be immediately obvious that the above examples go far beyond simple number crunching and place evaluation of the library firmly where it belongs — as a constituent part of the total examination of the college as an effective educational institution. Evaluation of the library is meaningless unless it is put into an educational context and, by the same token, evaluation of courses can not be effective without consideration of the impact of library services. There is an inextricable inter-relationship[4].

The movement beyond purely statistical reporting immediately takes us into problem areas. It is comparatively easy to measure the effectiveness of the service against performance-based objectives and its cost efficiency. It is more difficult to assess how much good is achieved by the service — even after agreement on objectives has related them to educational considerations — in that value judgements are inevitable and these judgements have to be based upon educational rather than administrative criteria. The achievement of library objectives which state that there should be 30 titles in stock for each FTE student and that 75 per cent of sought materials should be immediately available for use are fine in themselves, but they are based upon an act of faith that it is beneficial for students to read widely! It is necessary to refer to current educational theory and practice, exemplified by the experiential learning philosophy underlying most BTEC courses, to support the view that learning does not only take place in the lecture room and workshop and that the gathering, assessment and presentation of information as part of project work are important transferable skills[5]. Nevertheless, different persons within a college will place differing emphases upon the value of the library service as a whole and each individual will clearly value some parts of the service more than others. The college should, however, be able to reach an objective as well as intuitive consensus on the educational value added by the library's services and, as a corollary of the evaluation exercise, be able to state the financial value added by some services, bearing in mind, always, that economy does not necessarily equate with efficiency and that efficiency does not necessarily imply effectiveness.

4 Two papers by J Sprigg and J Allred at a college librarians' conference in 1985 provided an illuminating contrast in approach to evaluation In T Lomas *ed.* **Management issues in academic libraries**. Rossendale, 1986.

5 M McCarthy, 1984 Student-centred learning: the role of the library In T Lomas *ed.* **Libraries and BTEC** Library Association, College of Further and Higher Education Group, makes the case from the point of view of a lecturer who is also a BTEC moderator.

The resources required to support formal teaching have a finite purchase cost. Value is added to those materials by their collection in a central place, their classification and cataloguing by library staff to so organise and display them that they can be found when required and the management by library staff of a system for the loan and return of materials so that they are available for continual use. These additional costs can be isolated and, although there is an imprecise cost-benefit, this expenditure must be more economic as well as more useful than a haphazard shelf arrangement and the need constantly to replace materials which cannot be found.

BENEFIT V COST

Every librarian has experienced the overwhelming gratitude of a student who has been helped with an elementary enquiry for information. For the student the enquiry was not elementary, of course, and the presence of the librarian represented the difference between being able to continue with an essay and a long, and possibly unsuccessful, search through the jungle of reference books, or waiting until he/she could next see his lecturer. The added educational value for the student is enormous, even though the cost of providing that item of information is minute. There is, however, considerable cost involved in having a qualified librarian on duty whenever the library is open against the eventuality that at any time any of the staff or students in the college may require assistance in finding information. Educational benefit must be weighed against cost of salary.

A collection of periodicals and reference books — even a small one — is a recurrently expensive resource. Value is added to it by the additional expenditure on indexing and abstracting publications and the provision of computer literature searching services which act as a time-saving device for those seeking up-do-date or exhaustive information on specific topics. The librarian can, at very little cost, further add to the value of the periodicals collection and save a considerable amount of lecturers' time by photocopying and circulating the contents pages of recently received issues. Further value is added by the employment of qualified librarians, part of whose expertise is the ability to direct enquirers to the appropriate source of the information they require, to find the reference to the periodical article that has eluded the lecturer and to draw his attention to other relevant material which he/she did not know existed. Despite the academic virtues of serendipity, it must be more efficient and economic to use the intermediary information professional. The cost of the time saved to the

lecturer could be calculated and, although it would not be possible to calculate a contribution to profit margins — as can be done in commercial and industrial libraries — the lecturer has, nevertheless, presumably been allowed to use that time productively and will himself/herself contribute more effectively to the college through using the information to produce better lectures.

EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Successful and satisfactory evaluation will be subject to a number of pre-conditions and these will involve attitudes as much as anything else. Possibly the greatest importance has to be attached to the exercise being regarded by all concerned as a normal part of college operations. It must not be seen as an inquisitorial, even punitive process. The methodology must be discussed and agreed and the benefits thoroughly explained. With the benefit of historical perspective it is possible to see that a great part of the hostility to the Audit Commission has arisen from the suspicion — still not dispelled — that its studies have more to do with putting a further squeeze on public expenditure than with increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. Contrary to popular mythology, the great majority of employees — and librarians are no exception — want to work efficiently and will contribute enthusiastically to studies designed to assess their effectiveness and, if possible, to improve it.

Evaluation itself will be neither efficient nor effective if college management is unprepared to make information freely available. The secrecy of some colleges about such basic information as the breakdown of expenditure under budget heads is as inexplicable as it is obstructive.

Like must be compared with like for reliable and fair reporting, particularly when the information compiled for internal evaluation is to be passed elsewhere to form part of inter-college comparisons. In this respect, above all others, there should be agreement upon the standardised use of only one of the many possible formulae for the calculation of a full time equivalent student, otherwise there will be serious distortion of unit cost.

Although much of the information required for library evaluation will be collected on a day-to-day basis and will merely require aggregation, the college must allow for the time to analyse and present information either within library staff establishment or centrally. It should be noted that it will

be necessary to add considerably to existing headings if it is proposed to use FEMIS. The college must equally be prepared to allow library staff to attend courses to obtain the necessary expertise to undertake the examination of procedures and analysis required for evaluation. College librarians manage important and expensive educational resources and may, in common with many other heads of department, have to acquire managerial skills that will not necessarily have formed part of their professional education.

DON'T LOCK THE LIBRARIAN IN THE LIBRARY

It is of crucial importance that the library is represented on appropriate college committees from the academic board to course planning teams, both for the specific purpose of discussions on evaluation and the ongoing business of the college. The librarian, as a senior member of staff with college-wide responsibilities, is in a unique position to comment upon proposals and contribute to discussions of educational policy, transcending the interests of individual teaching departments.

At the individual course level the librarian can only obtain an awareness of the learning resources required for that course by participating in discussions with lecturers. Where these conditions exist the library will make a valuable contribution to the educational life of the college and the evaluative process takes on a dimension far removed from the annual reporting of items added to stock and loan statistics. It is perhaps in this area that the greatest changes of attitude are required. How often does the library discover the existence of a course only when students arrive in the library for project work? How often does the librarian show signs of life at the academic board only when the words 'library' or 'book' are used?

The good librarian seeks to be aware of what is happening outside the library and outside the college; the good college management ensures that the librarian is not locked into the library.

It has already been suggested that information on the library and its services may, in some colleges, be added to an enlarged FEMIS database. Where it is not, the availability of increasingly powerful computing equipment in even the smallest colleges will considerably ease the task of analysis. This facility needs to be made available to the library, together with expert assistance to write suitable programmes if necessary. Provision must also

be made, particularly in the smaller library, for occasional detailed surveys that may be required to discover, for instance, reasons for non-use of the library. There are many mutual advantages to be gained from using the specialised assistance of sociology, management and statistics lecturers to design questionnaires and select appropriate statistical techniques. In some colleges library and other departments co-operate to provide practical assignments for students on more advanced courses to survey, for example, usage patterns of specific areas of stock or other major exercises which would be beyond the resources of all but the largest libraries with their own research assistants.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper has been to draw out and highlight the opportunities for colleges and their libraries to build upon the more positive features of the currently fashionable demand for accountability in the public sector of further and higher education. It has sought to demonstrate that, while intuition is a powerful management tool it is no substitute for systematic assessment. Evaluation is clearly worth the effort. Librarians can manage more efficiently by being provided with the information on which to base decisions on day-to-day operational procedures and the use of resources. In this way they can justify the utilisation of available resources and have the factual information from which to prepare, present and defend the case for additional resources when services are failing to meet the college's requirements. At the same time college management has information on the extent to which the library is contributing to the educational role of the college, and to assist it to make decisions on the distribution of resources. External validators need no longer rely upon purely subjective impressions of the library's contribution to a course. Auditors are provided with information which relates expenditure to educational benefit. Above all, the process of evaluation clarifies and gives meaning to the real educational role of the college library.

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND INITIALISMS USED IN THIS REPORT

BTEC	—	Business and Technician Education Council
CAI	—	Computer Aided Instruction
CAL	—	Computer Aided Learning
CBL	—	Computer Based Learning
CET	—	Council for Educational Technology
CIMTECH	—	Centre for Information Media and Technology (Hatfield Polytechnic)
CLAIM	—	Centre for Library and Information Management (Loughborough University)
CNAA	—	Council for National Academic Awards
CoFHE	—	Colleges of Further and Higher Education Group (of the Library Association)
CPVE	—	Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education
FESC	—	Further Education Staff College
FEU	—	Further Education Unit
FTE	—	Full Time Equivalent
GCSE	—	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HERTIS	—	Hertfordshire County Council Technical Information Service
INSET	—	In-Service Education of Teachers
IT	—	Information Technology
LA	—	Library Association
LEA	—	Local Education Authority
MARIS	—	Materials and Resources Information Service
NAB	—	National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education

NATFHE	—	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
PICKUP	—	Professional Industrial and Commercial Updating
REPLAN	—	Adult re-training scheme (DES)
SSR	—	Staff Student Ratio
SSS	—	Supported Self Study
TVEI	—	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
UC&R	—	University, College and Research Section (of the Library Association)
YTS	—	Youth Training Scheme

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